



Utilities Element

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Utilities Element

A. Introduction

Seattle City Light provides electricity throughout the city and beyond the City boundaries. Seattle Public Utilities provides domestic water, drainage and solid waste services within the City limits. In addition, it provides water service directly, or through other purveyors, to much of King County. Seattle is served by, among others, the following investor-owned utilities: Puget Sound Energy, US WEST Communications, and; Viacom Cablevision, TCI Cablevision and Summit Cablevision, and Seattle Steam.

City utilities are overseen by the Mayor and the City Council. The Council establishes operational guidelines and requirements for City utilities through various resolutions and ordinances. Investor-owned utilities, on the other hand, are regulated by various public entities. The natural gas and telephone utilities are regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, while the cellular telephone communication companies are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission. Franchise agreements with the City shape the operation of the cable communication companies and Seattle Steam. In addition to the policies in this element, additional policies relating to technology and telecommunication services may be found in the Economic Development element of this Plan.

B. Goals

- UG1** Provide reliable service at lowest cost consistent with the City's aims of environmental stewardship, social equity, economic development, and the protection of public health.
- UG2** Maintain the service reliability of the City's utility infrastructure.
- UG3** Maximize the efficient use of resources by utility customers.
- UG4** Minimize the cost and public inconvenience of road and right-of-way trenching activities.
- UG5** Operate City utilities consistent with regional growth plans.
- UG6** Achieve universal access to state-of-the-art technology and telecommunication services.





C. Utility Policies

1. Utility Service

Discussion: State law generally requires utilities to serve all customers requesting service. The following policies address utility service and recovery of the costs of meeting new growth.

- U1** Continue to provide service to existing and new customers in all areas of the city, consistent with the legal obligation of City utilities to provide service.
- U2** Consider financial mechanisms to recover from new growth, the costs of new City utility facilities and, where appropriate, new utility resources necessitated by such service.

2. Utility Infrastructure

Discussion: Adequate utility service relies on sound facilities. The following policies address the reliability and maintenance of the City's utility infrastructure.

- U3** Maintain the reliability of the City's utility infrastructure as the first priority for utility capital expenditures.
- U4** Continue to provide for critical maintenance of and remedying existing deficiencies in City utility capital facilities.

3. Utility Capital Expenditure Planning

Discussion: City utilities plan their own capital expenditures. The following policies address coordination and the inclusion of recurring costs in utility capital expenditure planning.

- U5** Coordinate City utility capital expenditure planning with capital investment planning by other City departments.
- U6** Consider the operation and maintenance costs of new City utility facilities in developing such facilities.

4. Environmental Stewardship

Discussion: Environmental sensitivity in developing new resources and the efficient use of services by utility customers are key elements of the City's commitment to environmental stewardship. The following policies address the implementation of these elements by City utilities.

- U7** Promote environmental stewardship in meeting City utility service needs and encourage the efficient use of resources by utility customers.
- U8** Use cost-effective demand-side management to meet City utility resource needs and support such practices by wholesale customers of City utilities.





- U9** Consider short-term and long-term external environmental impacts and costs in the acquisition of new resources.
- U10** Encourage waste reduction and cost-effective reuse and recycling through appropriate policies and programs.
- U11** Strive to correct instances of combined sewer overflows by prioritizing remedial action according to the frequency and volume of the overflows and the sensitivity of the locations where the overflows occur.
- U12** Work cooperatively with King County to identify and expeditiously address combined sewer overflows for which the County maintains responsibility.

5. Utility Facility Siting and Design

Discussion: Public input in facility siting and design is a critical part of the business of City utilities. The following policies address siting and design of utility facilities in the city.

- U13** Work with neighborhood and community representatives in siting utility facilities.
- U14** Continue to subject all above-grade City utility capital improvement projects to review by the Seattle Design Commission.

- U15** Consider opportunities for incorporating accessible open space in the siting and design of City utility facilities.

6. Utility Relationships

Discussion: Coordination of activities among utilities operating in the city can result in additional public benefits. The following policies address road and right-of-way maintenance and the operation of non-City utilities in Seattle.

- U16** Provide timely and effective notification to other interested utilities of planned road and right-of-way trenching, maintenance, and upgrade activities.
- U17** Promote the City's goals of environmental stewardship, social equity, economic development, and the protection of public health in the operation of non-City utilities providing service in Seattle.





D. Inventory of Existing Public Infrastructure

The inventory of public infrastructure that is required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) is contained in Appendix A to this element of the Plan.

E. Forecast of Future Infrastructure Needs

Seattle is a highly urbanized area with a fully developed infrastructure network throughout the City. New buildings can be constructed in Seattle, and be served by the existing network of streets, water and sewer lines, drainage facilities and electrical grid. Forecasted future needs for the City owned utilities: water, drainage and wastewater, City Light and solid waste are discussed in Appendix A to this element of the Plan. The capital programs to meet these forecasted six-year needs are included in the City's most recently adopted *Capital Improvement Program (CIP)*.





F. Proposed New or Expanded Capital Facilities

Projects or programs identifying the proposed locations and capacities of the new or expanded capital facilities the City contemplates funding in the next six years, are listed in the City's most recently adopted CIP. Project descriptions and a six-year financing plan for each project or program are in the departmental sections in the body of the CIP. These projects are incorporated here. Emergencies, other unanticipated events or opportunities, and voter approvals of ballot measures, may result in some departure from the adopted CIP; however, in such circumstances, the City shall favor decisions that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

G. Six-Year Finance Plan

Projects or programs identifying the proposed locations and capacities of the new or expanded capital facilities the City contemplates funding in the next six years, are listed in the City's most recently adopted CIP. Project descriptions and a six-year financing plan for each project or program are in the departmental sections in the body of the CIP. These projects are incorporated herein. These allocations may change over time. Emergencies and unanticipated circumstances may result in allocating resources to projects not listed. The six-year finance plan shows full funding for all improvements to existing basic facilities and for new or expanded basic facilities the City expects to need to serve the existing and projected population through 2002. Additionally, the CIP contains substantial funding for major maintenance of the City's existing facilities.





H. Additional Resources

Consult the following resources for further information:

Seattle City Light Capital Improvement Program

Seattle Water Supply Plan

Seattle Public Utilities Capital Improvement Program

Seattle Comprehensive Drainage Plan

Seattle Capital Improvement Program

"On the Path to Sustainability," the City's solid waste plan

Puget Sound Energy

US WEST Communications, Seattle, Washington

Viacom Cablevision, Seattle, Washington

TCI Cablevision of Washington, Seattle, Washington

Summit Cablevision, Seattle, Washington

Seattle Steam Company, Seattle, Washington

